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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the services provided by elementary and middle school media centers to support whole language instruction, and to determine how the media program contributes to the goals, resources, and teaching strategies of the whole language movement. The population for the study included all 81 elementary and 15 middle schools in the Atlanta, Georgia, City School System. Data were collected in 1991-92 using a mailed survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Responses from 78% of the media specialists surveyed indicated that: (1) media center services to support whole language instruction included storytime, library displays, assisting pupils with research, book fairs, creative writing activities, and book reviews; (2) resources provided by the media program for whole language included media committee minutes, media memos, professional articles, whole language bibliographies, and a handbook of services; (3) cooperative planning between the classroom teachers and media specialists infused library skills into whole language instruction; and (4) assisting pupils with research was a priority. This research study helps bring attention to the significant role the media center plays in the whole language movement. It is concluded that whole language affords the library media center the opportunity to provide educational leadership and promote research and learning. Appendices include a letter to media specialists and a copy of the survey instrument. (12 references) (DB)

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WHOLE LANGUAGE AND THE MEDIA CENTER

by

BLANCHE CARTER THRASH

A SCHOLARLY STUDY

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the Degree of Educational Specialist in Library
Media Technology in the Department
of Curriculum and Instruction
in the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia

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Abstract

WHOLE LANGUAGE AND THE MEDIA CENTER

by
Blanche Carter Thrash

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate (a) the services provided by elementary and middle school media centers to support whole language instruction, and (b) how the media program contributes to the goals, resources and teaching strategies of the whole language movement.

Methods and Procedures

The population for this study included all 81 elementary and 15 middle schools in the Atlanta City School System which began whole language instruction on a systemwide basis in 1991-92. Data were collected using a mailed survey questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

Results

Responses were received from 78 percent of the media specialists surveyed. Media center services to support whole language instruction included storytime, library displays, assisting pupils with research, book fairs, creative writing activities and book reviews. Resources provided by the media program for whole language included media committee minutes, media memos, professional articles, whole language bibliographies and a handbook of services. Cooperative planning between the classroom teachers and media specialists infused library skills into whole language instruction. Assisting pupils with research was a number one priority (90%).

Conclusion

This research study helps bring attention to the significant role the media center plays in the whole language movement. Whole language affords the library media center the opportunity to provide educational leadership and promote research and learning.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The goal of whole language is to help students become avid and capable readers and writers. The days of scheduled media center periods and library skills taught out of context of classroom work need to be replaced with the new standard of service at the point of need. A media specialist in a whole language school is primarily a resource person who works with teachers as they plan and teach units based on children's literature (Lamme and Ledbetter, 1990).

Is there a right way to teach reading? Proponents stress that literacy is a natural, developmental process. They also believe that children should be taught to read with materials that are purposeful and meaningful to them. Most whole language believers are not against teaching phonics or comprehension skills or the mechanics of writing. They simply believe that those skills should not be taught and practiced in isolation from authentic language concepts (Conrad, 1989).

"Too often, we have relegated children to peeling vegetables without allowing them to savor the satisfaction of preparing the meal" (Conrad, 1989). Instead of directing children to copy exercises from the textbook, to fill in blanks on worksheets or workbook pages, or to read a story in a book and answer questions, the media specialist and teachers can plan so that students learn and use knowledge for real purposes that touch their lives directly.

In the United States today the emphasis on mastery learning and the movement back to basics have had a powerful impact on school curricula. Educators are pressured to make sure that children master skills and perform well on achievement tests. Learning has become synonymous with achievement as measured by separated bits of fragmented curriculum in which children spend most of their school day practicing skills that are isolated from worthwhile context. Life in this kind of environment can be unpleasant for children. Often they do tasks that are meaningless to them in order to please instructors or just get through the day. For the development of literacy to be enjoyable and natural, pupils need to engage in some meaningful and whole learning experiences. They need access to a wide variety of materials and much time to personally interact with them (Conrad, 1989).

Although the most immediate impetus for the whole language movement in the United States comes from Canada and, before that, New Zealand, the movement is grounded in the theories and methods of educators such as John Dewey, the original proponent of child-central instruction--Russell Stauffer, who advocated language experiences stories from beginning reading instruction, and Jeanette Veach and Dorothy Piercay, champions of "real life" reading materials (Conrad, 1989).

Wilson's (1991) study investigated the extent to which the role of the media specialist has changed due to the implementation of whole language into the curriculum. The areas assessed were the role of the media specialist with instruction, as an information specialist and a provider of services. The survey covered seven counties in Georgia and included 142 media specialists.

One hundred and six questionnaires were completed for a return rate of 74.6 percent.

Over 67 percent of the respondents indicated that their role as a provider of services had increased in all four of the assessed areas. Particularly significant was the increase (over 87 percent) in the role of the media specialist in the circulation of materials.

In the role of the media specialist as an instructor, almost 86 percent of the respondents indicated that their role as an instructor of parents had not changed due to whole language. In the role of the media specialist as an instructional consultant, 82 percent of the respondents reported that their involvement with teachers' selection/purchase of instructional materials had increased. In the role of the media specialist as an information specialist, nearly 82 percent of the respondents indicated that their role in providing assistance in locating information had increased.

Wilson's study revealed that the greatest change in the media specialist's role was as a provider of services. The writer of this paper will further investigate the diversity of media services rendered to support whole language instruction.

Buckley (1991) examined whole language and the media specialist to determine the degree of involvement media specialists have in whole language movements in their schools and the effect whole language has had on media center operations. A limitation of this study was determining which school systems were involved in whole language.

The subjects chosen for this study were media specialists in Georgia school districts which used whole language primarily on a systemwide basis.

The school systems used in the study were Douglas, Rockdale, Bartow, Cobb, Gwinnett and Chatham County Schools. Media specialists at 142 schools (113 elementary, 24 middle, and 5 high schools) were included in the study.

One hundred nine out of 142 completed surveys were returned. Over 80 percent of the survey participants worked in primary or elementary schools. Over one-third of the schools were in the second year of whole language, while 33 percent had used whole language 1 year or less. When asked what effect whole language had on cooperative planning with teachers, 77.1 percent of the media specialists responded there had been an increase, while 18.3 percent said whole language had not affected cooperative planning. The majority of media specialists believed teacher use of the media center had changed because of whole language. The number of years a school had been using whole language did not influence the media specialist's role. Whole language has seemingly influenced the media specialist's role in a number of ways. Among these are an increase in cooperative planning, more use as a resource person, more teacher input and more work.

One implication of Buckley's findings was that, in general, media specialists are not being involved in the early planning stages of whole language in their schools. Most media specialists surveyed said they had voluntarily received training in whole language, primarily in staff development sessions. According to Cullinan (1989), in schools where whole language is working well, media specialists have been involved from the very beginning stages of the program.

Considering all that has been written about whole language surprisingly very little of it concerns how the media program can enhance

whole language instruction throughout the curriculum. This study looks at contributions made by the media program to the whole language movement. It investigates how media centers create an inviting whole language environment in helping students to become regular school library media center users. The physical arrangement and collection along with services rendered will be explored.

Statement of the Problem

Proponents of whole language stress that literacy is a natural developmental process. They also believe that children should be taught to read with a diversity of materials. Therefore, the range of resources required include information books, fiction as well as non-print media. This emphasis on media places the media specialist and the media center at the forefront of the educational program.

The literature does not lend itself to clearly defining the media specialist's role and services provided by the media center in the whole language approach to teaching. However, teachers and children need assistance to make integration work in the classroom. They need organizational structures, curriculum frameworks, and appropriate media that encourage coherence across large spans of time and subject matter. This study was made to discover the impact media centers have on whole language instruction.

All elementary and middle school media centers in the Atlanta City School System were studied. The specific research questions were:

1. What services are provided by the media center to support whole language instruction?
2. How does the media program contribute to the goal, resources, and teaching strategies of the whole language movement?

Significance of the Problem

Discouraged by test scores, literacy rates and international rankings, teachers, media specialists and parents were ready for a renaissance. "Whole language is not a change in a few procedures but a complete change in attitude, strategies, resources and management" (Haycock, 1989, p. 11). It involves the implementation of many changes from one text to multiple resources, from teaching reading to integrated language development, from a single teacher to cooperative program planning for media center use and classroom instruction.

Educational leaders are having difficulty influencing the implementation of information skills instruction across the curriculum and rarely is there mention of the media center's role in this domain. Whole language gives media specialists a position on the teaching team. This research study may help bring attention to the significant role that the media center plays in whole language development.

Delimitation

A delimitation of the study was that, even though whole language was in progress throughout the Atlanta City School System, the survey was sent only to elementary and middle school media specialists. The high schools

were not implementing the whole language program in all phases of the curriculum.

Definition of Term

Whole language - set of beliefs, or a perspective that children acquire language through actual use, . . . they learn to read by reading, to write by writing, to speak by speaking, to listen by listening, and these disciplines should be integrated using a thematic approach.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature highlights pro and con issues surrounding the whole language program, characteristics of the whole language approach, and the media center's role in the whole language movement. The review explored three areas: (a) whole language issues, (b) implications for media specialists, and (c) media center services.

Whole Language Issues

Proponents of literature based whole language programs believe that the whole language movement should:

> Keep language whole--that reading, writing, talking and viewing should be natural parts of every lesson;
>
> Be child centered--that language lessons should be geared to meet individualized interests and needs; that the curriculum is best organized around broad themes within which a child can explore his or her own interests;
>
> Be literature-based--that in order to come to literacy naturally, a child should be exposed to high-impact reading materials (Harper, 1989, p. 18).

The public is fed up with our arguments about the best way to teach reading and writing. They want results (Farr, 1990). A recent Gallup poll reported that 77 percent of those surveyed favored the use of some sort of standardized measures to assess the academic achievement of students (New York Times, 1989).

The educator Farr (1990) suggested that direct teaching of needed skills and strategies is essential, but fractionating reading and writing and attempting to master skills and strategies separate from the total act of reading and writing is not productive. Much of anyone's reading and writing has a purpose beyond the enjoyment of a story. There is a need to help students learn to use reading and writing to engage in all sorts of economic and personal pursuits as productive citizens. Educators must define what we mean by adequate, good or excellent reading. They should agree on a definition of success. "We need to demonstrate to a skeptical public that students are succeeding in learning to read and write. Educators should agree on a definition of literacy. If they don't, how will they know which approaches are most effective"? (Farr, 1990)

Is whole language the right way to teach reading? Baumann (1990) answered "yes" because there is ample empirical evidence and plenty of common sense appeal for many of the manifestations of a whole language philosophy--authentic reading, writing, and oral language tasks. He also said "no" because he believes there is no one right way to teach reading. In the March 1989 issue of Educational Leadership, Goodman (1990), one of the most respected spokespersons for the whole language movement, criticized a school reading specialist who suggested combining traditional skill-based instruction and whole language. Similarly, when the idea that teachers should select among various options for teaching reading came up to a panel discussion, Goodman commented:

> I'd like to say a few bad words about eclecticism because it's comfortable to say teachers should listen to everything and then pick and choose. It's comfortable to say that if there appears to be

> polar positions, then the truth must lie some place safely in the middle. The middle of the road is a very thin white line and it's a dangerous place to try to stand (p. 7).

Allington (1990) reported that we may never know if whole language is the best way to teach reading.

> The American society generally does not trust its teachers. I hope that the current interest in whole language returns huge dividends, but I doubt that whole language in its truest sense will ever see widespread implementation in our schools. Teachers rarely are allowed to decide what to teach and perhaps because of this we develop few teachers who are truly literary experts. Instead, we develop teachers whose expertise lies in diagnostic skills assessments, specific skills objectives, and behavioral management. In addition, we mire ourselves in debates about methods and materials (p. 49).

Allington (1990) stated that we need to focus instead on the final principle--whether or not we will entitle all children to be literate. According to Sebesta (1990), we do the wrong kind of planning ahead. We plan what children will read and what they will get out of it. Children have their own wishes and needs.

In 1990, Tierney reported that whole language is increasingly becoming synonymous with a somewhat restricted set of materials: trade books, instructional activities such as free reading, and assessment practices such as running records. His greatest fear is that whole language may languish where it is right now. Teachers will focus on the activities rather than on the child. "I hypothesize that a whole language orientation will be fruitful if it continues to reach beyond itself and to others" (Tierney, 1990).

We know more than ever about child development, including the stages of emergent literacy and conditions to foster response to literature. We

know more about the ways children learn. The challenge facing whole language is how to incorporate this new knowledge into its philosophy.

Implications for the Media Specialist

The ability to read is the most important skill children acquire in school. It is no longer enough that children learn to decipher words. They must become efficient readers to successfully cope in today's society. The role of the media specialist is crucial in meeting pupil needs through media center services.

Literature-based reading plays a vital role in the language development of young people. It adds enjoyment and enthusiasm to the reading process and can instill a lifelong love of literature in students. Librarians and classroom teachers cooperatively create a successful learning environment. They work together because classroom teachers understand the unique needs and know the particular interest of each student while the media specialist knows the best resources available for the program.

The media specialist is the teacher's literature connection. School personnel should take advantage of the librarian's professional expertise. The article, The School Librarian--Your Literature Connection (Friedland, 1991), discussed the diverse roles of the media specialist which include:

1. Subscribe to professional magazines that feature articles and columns about children's literature.

2. Meet with teachers at curriculum and grade level meetings to keep up to date on upcoming teaching themes and units.

3. Post a curriculum map to keep all teachers informed about what other teachers are currently teaching and planning to teach.

4. Borrow from other sources--other school libraries, public libraries and academic libraries--based on instructional needs.

5. Tie in book purchases with the curriculum.

6. Display books on students' book-club lists and other books by authors represented in the book-club list that are already in the library.

7. Share book-publisher catalogs or ordering information with teachers.

8. Participate in a literature response group with teachers. Keep teachers current about what's new and related to their instructional needs (p. 35).

Wilson's (1991) investigation of the whole language approach and the changing role of the media specialist with the implementation of whole language surveyed seven counties in Georgia and included 142 media specialists. One hundred and six questionnaires were completed for a return rate of 74.6 percent.

The study indicated that the greatest change in the role of the media specialist due to whole language occurred in the role of the media specialist as a provider of services. Particularly significant was the increase (over 87 percent) in the role of the media specialist in the circulation of materials.

In the role of the media specialist as an instructor, almost 86 percent of the respondents indicated that their role as instructor of parents had not changed due to whole language. In the role of the media specialist as an instructional consultant, 82 percent of the respondents indicated that their role in providing assistance in locating information had increased.

Buckley's (1991) research study on whole language and the media specialist included participants from 142 Georgia media specialists at 113

elementary, 24 middle, and 5 high schools which were in districts using whole language, primarily on a systemwide basis. Data were collected using results from a mailed survey. Responses were received from 77 percent of the media specialists surveyed. The media specialist's role has been influenced significantly by whole language, primarily in the area of increased cooperative planning with classroom teachers and more opportunities to serve as a resource person. Whole language has affected media center operations by increasing circulation.

The California and National Reading Initiatives created an awareness of the need for literature and called attention to outstanding programs such as whole language that are leading people to literature.

> State department surveys reported that media centers are playing an integral role in the literacy initiative in getting the best books into children's hands. Enlightened state leaders turn to media centers as a natural source of up-to-date information about quality literature. Keeping up with new books is a part of a librarian's job and learning how to use them with children is part of their training (Cullinan, 1989, p. 27).

Themes are an important component of whole language instruction. The media center provides strategies for weaving literature into themes and suggesting the books to help support the unit of study.

> We always introduce a theme through a read aloud. Naturally, the book we choose should be an example of quality literature and clearly demonstrate the theme. During the read aloud time, we model and encourage the language of response--both oral and written. We know a theme is working when students suggest titles to add to the list (Johnson and Wiggins, 1991, p. 35).

Media Center Services

Will literature based reading texts weaken or strengthen the media center's role by anthologizing trade materials usually housed in the media center? The impact of these texts depends upon the stated aim for the library program. If the goal of the school's library program is the development of skills for lifelong learning and a commitment to informed decision making, then whole language will fit well into this framework. If, on the other hand, the primary aim of the library program is to provide spare periods for classroom teachers and secondarily to teach library skills, then the media specialist's role will be peripheral at best and impeding at worst.

Because of the critical demand for more resources as we move toward whole language, media centers are the key to excellent school-wide literacy programs. Lamme and Ledbetter (1990) suggested the following school-wide projects:

1. In-service sessions to update teachers on current literature and its uses with students.

2. Organize a school-wide read-aloud program designed so that students are exposed to a wide variety of the best children's literature.

3. Sponsor a home reading program and plan motivational activities to keep it going.

4. Coordinate school-wide thematic units along with classroom teachers (Language Arts, Vol. 67, 1990).

A common feature of literature-based reading is that it is fun. In the media center the librarian provides incentives for enjoying literature by telling and reading interesting stories. The media center has the best books

for student selection and those most popular at any given grade level. Non-print materials and equipment add information and enjoyment to the unit of study. Special story tellers, authors and puppeteers are invited to the media center to make exciting presentations. It is not uncommon to see a child sign-out a library book far beyond his or her reading level just to attempt to convince classmates of reading competency.

Student assignments are another component of the whole language program. The classroom teacher who knows the students far better than the media specialist takes responsibility for tailoring the level of difficulty of these assignments to each student's ability. The librarian helps each student succeed because success is a powerful motivator.

Where else but the media center can the teacher find real books, real magazines, real newspapers and all other forms of literature at all reading levels, in all spheres of interest and at many levels of sophistication? "The media center helps assure students of skills they need to survive in tomorrow's world. Ideally they will help to make every student an efferent reader bubbling with enthusiasm for the printed word" (Harper, 1990, p. 20).

Summary

Whole language literature points out significant changes in beliefs about education, in approaches to teaching and learning, and type of materials used to support the program. Whole language arouses anxiety in proponents of the movement and lends itself to building a child's self-esteem.

The major thrust of the literature made suggestions for applying whole language concepts to classroom instruction. It also proved to newcomers that

they are not as far behind or unprepared as they might think. Integrating one's personal experiences with the curriculum means that what children bring to the story is as important as what is there.

Although the media center's role was not clearly defined in the literature researched, the positive impact it has on whole language development was implied.

"It has been said that history is what happened and literature is how people felt about it. Too often, kids are introduced to history as if it belongs to adults" (Stanek, 1991, p. 187). The media center is the hub of historic literature and whole language enables everyone to benefit.

> School library media centers play a very important role in guiding children toward becoming independent readers. It is through library experiences that children may be liberated from the narrow confines of their classroom reading programs and led to the wider world of reading available to them in the media center (Wilkens, 1984, p. 104).

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

This exploratory descriptive study using a questionnaire survey methodology looks at media center operations in the whole language curriculum. The move to literature-based instruction and whole language results in enormous demands on the resources of the school media center. In a whole language school, the media center can be the key to the success of the literacy program. The media center's services need to be addressed and emphasized.

This survey researched media center services that enhance whole language instruction and contributions made by the media program to the whole language movement.

Population

The subjects for this study were media specialists in all 81 elementary and 15 middle schools in the Atlanta Public School District. The whole language initiative was begun throughout the Atlanta City System during the 1991-92 school year. Whole language instruction has been implemented in all grade levels of the elementary schools and within designated subject areas in the middle schools. A list of all elementary and middle schools was found in the current directory of Atlanta City Schools.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was designed for this study. The instrument included 12 questions related to the services provided by the media center to support whole language instruction and how the media program contributes to the goals, resources, and teaching strategies of the whole language movement. Questions 6, 7, 9 and 10 measured the first research question. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11 and 12 measured the second research question. Members of the ELMT (Research in Library Media Technology) class at Georgia State University examined and discussed the questionnaire. It was piloted by four media specialists in Fulton and Dekalb counties. The researcher discussed the questionnaire with the whole language coordinator.

Collection of Data

A letter of request to conduct the study was secured from school authorities. The letter of request defined the purpose of the study, including a cover letter and the survey instrument.

Surveys were coded for return accountability and mailed to media specialists on January 8, 1992. The survey participants were asked to return them within 10 days in the addressed-stamped envelope provided. A follow-up phone call was made to those who had not responded by January 20, 1992.

Analysis of Data

The data from the returned questionnaires will be analyzed by using the computer Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis of the data will primarily be concerned with basic descriptive statistics because of the discrete variables. All missing data will be noted.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Seventy-five (75%) of the ninety-six survey instruments that were mailed to the media specialists were returned. Of the surveys returned, sixty-one (61%) were returned from media specialists in elementary schools, and fourteen (19%) were returned from media specialists in middle schools. All of the surveys were used. The media specialists were asked to respond to all items of a question when applicable. Therefore, the percents did not add up to 100% on all occasions.

Survey question 1 was concerned with the type of preparation the media specialists received for the implementation of the whole language program. Table 1 reports the frequency distribution of the types of preparation received by the media specialists.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of the Types of Preparation Received

Preparation	N=75	Frequency	Percent
Staff development		69	92
Publishing company workshop		40	53
On-site observation of whole language in action		24	32
Conferences		20	27
College courses		3	4

Table 2 indicates the print and non-print media center collection by subject areas that support whole language instruction.

Table 2

Print and Non-Print Media by Subject Areas

Subject Area		N-75	Print Media Frequency	Print Media Percent	Non-Print Media Frequency	Non-Print Media Percent
000-099	General Works		28	37	26	34
100-199	Philosophy		24	32	22	29
200-299	Religion		30	40	18	24
300-399	Social Sciences		55	73	31	41
400-499	Language		20	26	18	24
500-599	Science		33	44	40	53
600-699	Useful Arts		25	33	27	36
700-799	Fine Arts		21	28	22	29
800-899	Literature		43	57	32	43
900-999	History		21	28	22	29
	Fiction		35	47	33	44
	Biography		32	43	36	48
	Reference		19	25	18	24
	Easy		26	35	27	36
	Professional		15	20	22	29

Table 3 represents the number and percent of media specialists indicating which print media and non-print media by subject areas supporting whole language needed updating. The mean for print media was 23.7%. The mean for non-print media was 22.93%.

Table 3

Subject Areas of Print and Non-Print Media Needing Updating in Order to Support Whole Language

Subject Area	N=75	Print Media		Non-Print Media	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
000-099	General Works	15	20	17	23
100-199	Philosophy	24	32	22	17
200-299	Religion	30	40	18	40
300-399	Social Sciences	55	73	31	31
400-499	Language	20	26	18	27
500-599	Science	33	44	40	40
600-699	Useful Arts	25	33	27	25
700-799	Fine Arts	21	28	22	28
800-899	Literature	43	57	32	39
900-999	History	21	28	22	28
	Fiction	35	47	33	41
	Biography	32	43	36	36
	Reference	19	25	18	27
	Easy	26	35	27	31
	Professional	15	20	22	27

Of the responding media specialists, seventy-five (100%) indicated that whole language did not eliminate the teaching of the basic media center skills. Seventy-five media specialists (100%) responded that the media program's budget had not increased with the implementation of the whole language program. Seventy-five media specialists (100%) agreed that the whole language program did not necessitate rearranging the library facility to enhance its goal.

The resources provided by the media program on whole language, and the result of the media specialists' responses are shown in Table 4. Seventy-five media specialists (100%) provided media memos, media committee minutes, and whole language bibliographies through the media program.

Table 4

Resources Available Through the Media Program

Resource	N-75	Frequency	Percent
Media Memos		75	100
Media Committee Minutes		75	100
Whole Language Bibliographies		75	100
Handbook		60	80
Professional Articles		40	53
Other		10	13

Table 5 shows the purposes by frequency and rank for which the media center is most often used.

Table 5

Ranking of Media Center Use

Rank	N=75	Frequency	Use
1		68	Cooperative writing activities
2		56	Storytime
3		43	Assisting pupils with research
4		41	Library related programs
5		40	Library displays
6		10	Giving book reviews/talks
7		7	Creative writing activities
8		5	Book Fairs
9		2	Planning theme celebrations
10		1	Cooperative planning

Table 6 presents the services provided by the media center that enhance whole language instruction. More interaction with teachers was the major advantage.

Table 6

Advantages of Whole Language as Perceived by the Media Specialists

Advantages	N=75	Frequency	Percent
More interaction with teachers		73	97
Promotes flexible scheduling		60	80
Promotes individual/small group use of media center		49	65
Better integration of media skills instruction with curriculum		39	52

Table 7 presents some disadvantages of whole language to the media program. The media specialists responded collection needs updating (91%) as the main disadvantage.

Table 7

Disadvantages of Whole Language as Perceived by the Media Specialists

Disadvantages	N=75	Frequency	Percent
Collection needs updating		68	91
Increased workload for media specialist		40	53
Less time to plan with teachers		18	24
Fewer teachers using the media center		11	15
Fewer students using the media center		10	13

The frequency and number of years as a media specialist is shown in Table 8. The mean years as a library media specialist was 20.57 years. The median was 21 years.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution of Years as a Media Specialist

Advantages	N=75	Frequency	Percent (101)
3		8	11
7		5	7
11		3	4
15		5	7
18		5	7
21		15	20
23		3	4
24		10	13
25		4	5
28		4	5
31		5	7
36		3	4
38		5	7

Chapter V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Findings

This research study investigated the media center services and contributions made by the media program to the whole language movement in all elementary and middle schools in the Atlanta City School System.

Media services provided by the media center included media committee minutes, media memos, handbook of media services and bibliographies on whole language themes. Professional articles were provided for teachers and book fairs were a yearly service provided by several media centers. Resource persons outside of the school were invited to the media center as a service and resource to teachers and students.

Media center services promote flexible scheduling, more interaction with teachers and integrate media skills instruction for whole language programs. Media center collections need updating to support the whole language curriculum. Designing worksheets for library activities and writing skits for theme celebrations were creative ways media specialists motivated teachers to use the media center.

The media program contributes to the goal, resources and teaching strategies of the whole language movement according to the research findings. The media center supports the whole language curriculum with

storytime, reference skills related to classroom instruction, library displays, creative writing activities and planning theme celebrations. The media specialists cooperatively plan with the classroom teachers to meet pupils' needs and interests.

The library collections indicated that the Social Science areas were adequate for whole language instruction. However, a majority of the media centers' over-all print and non-print media needed updating. The media specialist is a valuable resource person in the school. Inservice activities including workshops with a display of new media, book reviews, and professional articles are shared in the media center to upgrade the whole language program.

Discussion

The literature suggests that the goal of whole language is to assist pupils with mastery of reading and writing. The media center supports the whole language curriculum in a diversity of ways. Teachers and media specialists plan lessons so that media center visits will promote classroom performance. The knowledge and experience of the library media specialist in the selection and use of the materials are a valuable program support. The media specialist suggests effective ways to present reading and writing materials and makes print and non-print media accessible. Media center visits include library skill activities as well as storytime and pleasure reading. Resource persons are invited to share stories and other reading activities with students. Book fairs and book reviews are held to expose students to a wide variety of printed materials.

The literature indicated that whole language instills in children a life long love for reading. The findings showed that a majority of the media specialists assist pupils with research. Children will become more independent in their reading practices once they have learned how to use reference books and the card catalog in the media center. This information will be helpful while pursuing an education as well as when the children become adults.

More interaction with teachers is a strong advantage of whole language and the media program. Likewise, cooperative planning can be strengthened with more effective flexible scheduling in order for media center visits to reflect classroom teaching and learning. Information Power (1988) states that "policies governing use of the facility and the resources should be flexible and encourage access. Classes should never be scheduled on a fixed or rigid basis." The AASL-AECT document (1988) also makes it clear that media specialists need the involvement of teachers to implement flexible scheduling. Whole language and the media center involves interpersonal and organizational communication between teachers and media specialists. Effective flexible scheduling is crucial to the success of the whole language program.

This study did not investigate the school administrator's role in supporting whole language and the media center. Further research questions relating to this study for consideration are:

1. How are school administrators improving media center services and operations with the whole language curriculum?
2. How are media specialists included in writing, revising, and changing the whole language curriculum?

Applications

The findings in this research study suggest using more assertive and creative ways to promote the school library center habit. Creating an inviting whole language environment is fundamental to helping children become regular users of the media center. Its physical arrangement must be such that students feel comfortable for serious study, browsing or for enjoyable recreational reading.

The results in this research study implied that media specialists need to reevaluate their collections. Library media centers should provide print and non-print media that motivate children to read. The media specialists consult with teachers to select appropriate media and work with students to select materials suitable for their special reading needs. The media committee, PTA, and other supportive organizations can supplement the library's budget for updating its collection. The media specialist will involve parents and the community at large with programs to upgrade whole language instruction. Volunteers will be encouraged to read stories to pupils and work in the media center on a regular basis.

Workshops are a creative way for media specialists to alert teachers about the current research dealing with new whole language teaching strategies. Professional articles will be shared and discussed. These workshops afford the media specialist the opportunity to let their fellow teachers know that they have the professional expertise to provide educational leadership and present innovative ideas for academic success.

The results of the survey reveal that the majority of the media centers have the same advantages and disadvantages with whole language

instruction. Inter-library cooperation for presenting workshops and circulating print and non-print media would strengthen the Atlanta City Schools' library media centers' programs. Media specialists can pool their resources by sharing in the task of presenting workshops and other staff development related to whole language and the media center. For instance, if a workshop is prepared for a certain grade level in one school, the same workshop should be presented in another school. The library media specialist in that school might reciprocate by presenting a workshop on a special topic for the partner school. Planning in this cooperative manner will not only save time, but will add new life to the school library media program.

School library media specialists can expand their services to disabled readers. "A disabled reader is a child who, after having had adequate reading instruction, fails to perform at the reading level expected for comparisons with other children of the same age and intelligence" (Wilkens, 1984, p. 117). Media specialists need to be knowledgeable of the factors that cause children to become disabled readers. Their role in helping disabled readers is not one of diagnostician but of remediation specialist. They can work with reading diagnosticians and special reading teachers to select appropriate reading materials. Special volunteers can be recruited to work with disabled readers in the media center. Reading areas suitable for these readers should be set up in the media center. Professional articles related to the slow reader will help the media specialist keep abreast of new trends in helping disabled readers.

Library media specialists need to infuse media skills into whole language instruction. These skills are both meaningful and useful when taught in conjunction with the reading activities in the classroom. Whole

language "promotes the school library media center as the heart of the school from which and to which all learning should flow" (Wilden, 1984).

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Media Specialists

C. D. HUBERT SCHOOL

1043 Memorial Drive, S.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30316

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Barbara M. Gross
Principal

Phone – 330-4183

January 23, 1992

Dear Media Specialist:

As part of the requirement for the Specialist Degree in Library Media Technology at Georgia State University, I am conducting a survey. Your direct response is needed to gain vital information on media center services in the whole language curriculum throughout the Atlanta City School System.

You do not need to identify yourself. All information will be confidential. Please complete the survey and return it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Please return the completed survey by January 31, 1992. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Blanche C. Thrash

Blanche C. Thrash

"THE SCHOOL CANNOT LIVE APART FROM THE COMMUNITY"

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Whole Language and the Media Center

1. Indicate the preparation you have received for the implementation of whole language? (check all that apply)

_____ Staff development
_____ Publishing company workshop
_____ On-site observation of whole language in action
_____ College courses
_____ Conferences
_____ Other (specify)

_____

_____ None

2. Place a "+" by print and non-print media that supports whole language; place a "-" by subject areas that need updating.

		Print	Non-print
000-099	General Works	_____	_____
100-199	Philosophy	_____	_____
200-299	Religion	_____	_____
300-399	Social Sciences	_____	_____
400-499	Language	_____	_____
500-599	Science	_____	_____
600-699	Useful Arts	_____	_____
700-799	Fine Arts	_____	_____
800-899	Literature	_____	_____
900-999	History	_____	_____
	Fiction	_____	_____
	Biography	_____	_____
	Reference	_____	_____
	Easy	_____	_____
	Professional	_____	_____

3. Has whole language eliminated the teaching of basic media center skills?

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Has the media program's budget increased to supplement the whole language program?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. Did the whole language program necessitate rearranging the library facility to enhance its goals?

_____ Yes _____ No

6. Check below the resources provided by your media program.

_____ Media Memos
_____ Handbook
_____ Media Committee Minutes
_____ Whole Language Bibliographies
_____ Professional Articles
_____ Other (specify) _____

7. The media center is used most frequently for: (rank all that apply with "1" being most frequent)

_____ Story time
_____ Teaching reference skills
_____ Giving book reviews/talks
_____ Creative writing activities
_____ Assisting pupils with research
_____ Planning theme celebrations
_____ Book Fairs
_____ Cooperative planning
_____ Library displays
_____ Library related programs
_____ Other (specify)

_____

8. What are the advantages of whole language in the media center? (check all that apply)

_____ Promotes flexible scheduling
_____ More interaction with teachers
_____ Better integration of media skills instruction with curriculum
_____ Promotes individual and small group use of the media center
_____ Other (specify)

_____

9. What are some disadvantages of whole language programs in relation to the media center? (check all that apply)

_____ Fewer students using the media center
_____ Fewer teachers using the media center
_____ Less time to plan with teachers
_____ Increased workload for media specialist
_____ Collection needs updating

10. In what creative ways do you motivate teachers to use the media center?

11. What in-service activities have you conducted to promote the whole language program in the school?

12. How many years have you been a media specialist?

_____ Years